

INTERVIEW WITH ED CROZIER  
BY DOROTHE NORTON, NOVEMBER 7, 2002  
BURNSVILLE, MINNESOTA  
(Also present Mrs. Caryl Crozier)

MS. NORTON: Good morning, Ed! It's nice to see you again after all of these years. Thank you for the time you're going to spend with me to do this interview. The first thing we want to ask is your birthplace and date.

MR. CROZIER: I was born in Russell, Minnesota. It's a little town in the southwestern part of the state, on December 4, 1934.

MS. NORTON: What were your parents' names?

MR. CROZIER: Ed and Ella Crozier.

MS. NORTON: What were their jobs and education?

MR. CROZIER: They were both high school graduates from Russell. But we lived most of the time in Jasper, MN where my Dad was a foreman in the lumberyard there. He was the foreman and bookkeeper. Mom was a home keeper.

MS. NORTON: Where did you spend your early years?

MR. CROZIER: We moved to Jasper, which is a small town way in the SW corner of the state in about 1938. I was there until I went to college.

MS. NORTON: Did you have any jobs before you went to college?

MR. CROZIER: Oh yeah! I worked at the lumberyard there in the summers. I also worked in a stone quarry.

MS. NORTON: Did you hunt or fish?

MR. CROZIER: I hunted and fished all of the time.

MS. NORTON: What high school did you attend? When did you graduate?

MR. CROZIER: It was Jasper High School. I graduated in 1952.

MS. NORTON: What university did you attend?

MR. CROZIER: I went to South Dakota State University in Brookings. I graduated from there with a BS in Wildlife Management in 1956.

MS. NORTON: What aspect of your formal education equipped you for the future?

MR. CROZIER: I didn't do very good at school, so, actually, it was my summer jobs! I spend my first summer with the Forest Service in a look out tower in western Montana. Then, the next summer I was fighting forest fires in Yellowstone National Park. The third summer, I was a Student Assistant at Agassiz. They were all federal jobs so that added to my time with the federal service. It gave me experience with the federal government. I am sure that's the real that I got in to the USFWS; because of my time as a SA at Agassiz. That's when Robley Hunt and John Carlson were there.

MS. NORTON: Did you have mentors or courses that especially stuck with you?

MR. CROZIER: Well in hindsight, I think my mentor was Forest Carpenter. He interviewed me for a job in the old Buzzard Building in 1957, I believe. That's when I started with the FWS. He then kind of made sure that I moved up the career ladder. When we were both retired, he was just living a few miles from us. We still communicated right up until the time he died. We had a good relationship.

MS. NORTON: Were you ever in the military service?

MR. CROZIER: Yep. I started at Crab Orchard as the Refuge Manager Trainee and I was only there for about a month and I got drafted into the Army. I spent two years with the Army in Germany. Most of that time I was with the Marksmanship detachment. Then, in those days when you were drafted or went from the Civil Service to the federal government or the Army, you automatically got any pay raises or promotions. I went in as a 5, and when I came out, they gave me a 7. I started as a District Manager at Upper Mississippi. I served my probationary time and got promoted when I was in the Army.

MS. NORTON: That's good! Can you tell me when, where and how you met your wife?

MR. CROZIER: She was going to college at Augustana College in Sioux Falls. When I went down there for my Army physical, I met her. A friend knew her roommate, and we went out to see them. That's how I met her. We started communicating. We never lived closer than four or five hundred miles.

MRS. CROZIER: We were pen pals for four years, and then got married!

MR. CROZIER: Yeah!

MS. NORTON: When and where did you get married?

MR. CROZIER: We got married in her hometown of Beresford, South Dakota in 1960. But there is another interesting story. When I was the District Manager at Upper Miss, she came down to visit me by train. There was a layover in Winona, where the HQ was. She had some spare time so she went over to the Refuge office and talked with Doc Green and Don Gray about me; to check me out. Evidently gave me a good recommendation.

MS. NORTON: You passed!

MR. CROZIER: Yeah, right!

MS. NORTON: How many children do you have?

MR. CROZIER: We have two daughters. One is a professor at Emory University in Atlanta. She has a PhD in Public Health. Our youngest one live four miles away from us on Lake Marion in Lakeview. She's got a Master's Degree and teaches in the Burnsville school system. She has two daughters.

MS. NORTON: Now we'll start in on your career with the USFWS. Why did you want to work for the FWS?

MR. CROZIER: I've got all of this written down, but I was not very competitive in high school so I wasn't really an athlete and somehow, I turned to the outdoors. I started hunting and fishing in those days. My great-grandfather was a gamekeeper in Europe and my grandmother used to tell stories about him all of the time. In hindsight, I kind of think that maybe that was what influenced me to go into to wildlife management. I never thought about it at the time, but looking back, I think that might have influenced me.

MS. NORTON: What was your first professional position with the FWS?

MR. CROZIER: The summer jobs, and Refuge Manager Trainee. That was in March on 1957 at Crab Orchard Refuge. That was the first permanent position.

MS. NORTON: Where did you go from there?

MR. CROZIER: Then went into the Army for two years. When I came out I was the District Manager at Cassville for the Upper Mississippi NWR. I was there for a year as a bachelor, then Caryl came down and we got married. I was there for one more year and we went to Jamestown. There, we were in the Acquisition office and I was the Delineation Biologist, or Wetland Biologist/Manager. We were there maybe two years and transferred to Tewaukon NWF in southeastern North Dakota where I was the Refuge

Manager. We were only there for ten months and I was promoted to Refuge Manager in Charge at Mark Twain in Quincy. We were there for two years and then I came in to the Regional Office to join the Refuge staff. I was the Master Planner in charge of master planning for several years. Then we kind of formed an interdisciplinary planning team with an engineer, an architect and a graphic arts kind of guy. We were doing so well that they nationalized us and created the National Planning Team. I was chief of that for several years. We did plans all over the country; in Hawaii, Alaska, San Francisco Bay, Chincoteague, Aransas, we really went all over the country. We had some great times. Then they wanted us to move to Washington and none of us wanted to do that. That group was eventually disbanded and I became kind of the chief of Refuges here. [Minneapolis] I was kind of in charge of all of the staff people. Then I was head of the Interpretation and Recreation Planning group. After that I got involved in the establishment of the Minnesota Valley NWR. I was actually the founder of that, and worked with the local citizens to get money and the Congressional authorization. I then became the first Refuge Manager of that place. I was there for nine years. The last job I had was the Supervisor of Refuges for Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan in the Regional Office. That's the job I had when I retired.

MS. NORTON: So you left FWS when you retired?

MR. CROZIER: Yes, I was what I think they called the Regional Supervisor. There were three of us. I had Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

MS. NORTON: What grade was that?

MR. CROZIER: That was a GS-14.

MS. NORTON: Did your career affect your family at all?

MR. CROZIER: Well, the first ten years we moved a lot.

MRS. CROZIER: We moved four or five times before Michelle was even in school.

MR. CROZIER: Yeah, we moved a lot. In those days, you did. And it was fairly easy for us. But then, we've been in Minneapolis since 1965. We've been in this house since 1970, thirty-two years. We've had a very stable life. I had the opportunity to move back and forth between jobs here in the same location. I got to the 14 level without moving around. I was pretty lucky. I had great career. In the process, I got the Meritorious Service Award and Distinguished Service Award. I got a lot of recognition from FWS and I just had a wonderful career. It was fantastic!

MS. NORTON: What kind of training did you receive for your jobs?

MR. CROZIER: I went to Law Enforcement in Glencoe and a lot of Management Training. There was one in Denver and in other places. These were all predecessors to the courses that have at NCTC now. I had quite a bit. I don't remember the specifics of all of them.

MS. NORTON: What hours did you work?

MR. CROZIER: Well, on the field jobs it was all hours! We were out at night and in the early morning and everything. We were doing law enforcement and banding ducks and things like that. I can remember on Mark Twain getting up and start watching people at 3:00AM, and being there until nine or ten o'clock at night. Naturally, here in Minneapolis, it was more regular office hours.

MS. NORTON: Did you have any special tools or instruments that you used in your jobs?

MR. CROZIER: Oh yeah, the typical guns, bullets, cars. Nothing special.

MS. NORTON: Did you witness any new inventions or innovations while you were working?

MR. CROZIER: Well yeah, I think the formation of our planning team was kind of a new thing. It was an interdisciplinary planning team, before that it was just an engineer and a refuge manager. We added some other disciplines to the planning effort. I was involved in the first computerized planning of refuges. In fact, I got a reprimand for getting the first computer on a refuge. We got it through a contract and the contracting office didn't think that was such a good idea! [Laughter] So, I got a little warning for that!

MS. NORTON: Did you work with animals?

MR. CROZIER: Yeah, we banded ducks and trapped deer and tagged them. We had a problem here in the city. It was the usual refuge manager kind of activities.

MS. NORTON: How did you feel toward the animals?

MR. CROZIER: That was what my job was.

MS. NORTON: What kind of support did you receive; locally, regionally, federally in some of your earlier jobs?

MR. CROZIER: We had the typical regional office support. When I was at Upper Miss that was a one-man duty station so you were kind of all by yourself. There wasn't much support there. Of course as you went through the process you had more and more staff.

When you were in the Regional Office, there was a lot of staff around. I had good support from Engineering and Personnel, and everybody. There were some good people there to help out.

MS. NORTON: How do you think the FWS was perceived by people outside the agency?

MR. CROZIER: Not always so good. Generally, I guess it was pretty good in the locations I was at. But there were places where it wasn't thought of so well. Fortunately, when we went to North Dakota, it was in the early stages of the Wetlands Acquisition Program. It got pretty nasty as years went by up there. Here in town, when I worked with the local citizens on establishing the Minnesota Valley NWR it was fantastic. It was really great. We started the first Friends of the NWR group. I am pretty sure the first one was started here when I was the Refuge Manager at Minnesota Valley.

MS. NORTON: How were agency/community relations?

MR. CROZIER: I thought they were pretty good. We mixed with the community in North Dakota. My wife and I were both involved in the community. I wrote a column for the local newspapers on a weekly basis. At Quincy it was a little different because you didn't live on the refuge. You lived in town so you were a little more anonymous. It wasn't so great there. It was just kind of neutral. When we came in here, we started working with the local people and that was the best.

MS. NORTON: What projects were you involved in?

MR. CROZIER: I was involved in a lot of them. When we were in the planning process, we did some planning for the Bertram, the steamboat on DeSoto. We did some of the first work on the San Francisco Bay NWR. We did plans for San Francisco, Aransas, Chincoteague, and Wichita Mountains. Not all of those plans were implemented, but you can go back and see where portions of them people picked up the ideas and went with them. Of course, the last one and the most significant to my career was the establishment of Minnesota Valley Refuge.

MS. NORTON: Where there any major issues that you had to deal with?

MR. CROZIER: There were issues all of the time! I can remember one time people wrote to the President and complained about me. Fortunately, they got the letters mixed up and the letter they were sending to me went to the President, and I got the one that there were sending to him. So I just didn't do anything with that one. The President sent the one that was coming to me down the chain of command, and I answered it! You'd have those kinds of things; people complaining. That was one that comes to mind. Here

in town we had an overpopulation of deer in an urban setting in metropolitan Minneapolis area. We worked that out. This was one of the first places we were able to get the sharp shooting done to reduce the deer herd. That was an issue. I got sued by the local Sierra Club and Audubon Club, I think here in town. I didn't want to spray for mosquitoes and the Regional Office thought it didn't want to get involved in a fight with the metropolitan mosquito control district. They said we should let them come in and spray. So I got sued. We settled out of court and ended up restricting the mosquito control district from spraying on the refuge. This kind of established a precedent here in the local area for controlling mosquitoes here and on sanctuary wildlife areas.

MS. NORTON: What was the major impediment to your job or your career?

MR. CROZIER: I didn't have one! Money, I guess. I was able to beat the system most of the time. If there was red tape, we got around it one way or the other by working with local citizens and figuring out ways. That was the challenge of the job; figuring out how to get it done with the obstacles that were presented. Most of the time I was quite successful.

MS. NORTON: Who were your Supervisors?

MR. CROZIER: Forest Carpenter was my supervisor for the most part. Harry Stiles was a supervisor for a while. Then there were the Chiefs in Refuges. I remember Dr. Scott was Chief of Refuges. He was my supervisor for a while. Lynn Greenwalt then became Chief. He was my supervisor for a short time. Most of my career was...well later it was John Eadie. There was Ellis Klett. Sue Hasseltine. I forget who was supervisor when I left.

MS. NORTON: Who do you think the individuals were who shaped your career?

MR. CROZIER: No question about it, it was Forest Carpenter. He arranged for ... well you know in those days you didn't put in for a job. They'd call you up and say, "We'd like you to move". I am pretty sure it was Forest Carpenter who directed all of those moves early in my career; right up until the last couple of jobs.

MS. NORTON: Who were some of the people you knew outside of the agency?

MR. CROZIER: I got to know all of the local Congressmen in the area here. We worked quite closed with Senator Mondale who became Vice President. We had a good relationship with the federal Congressmen here.

MS. NORTON: Do you remember any of the Presidents, Secretaries of the Interior, or Directors of FWS that you worked under?

MR. CROZIER: Jim Watt was there for a while, and Udall. I met most of those people at one time or another. They came to visit the refuge or I visited them in Washington. I was introduced to most of them.

MS. NORTON: How did the changes in administrations affect your work?

MR. CROZIER: It went up and down. There was a trend towards conservatism maybe more in the later years with land acquisition. This was with Republicans. The Democrats seemed to be a little bit more supportive. Of course, I was the Bicentennial Land Heritage Coordinator in those days when Ford authorized all of that money to be spent on refuges. Later, I don't know who was President; but I was coordinator of the flood program in the 1993 flood. There was a lot of money that came down as a result of that.

MS. NORTON: In your opinion, who were the individuals who shaped the FWS?

MR. CROZIER: To be honest, that's always been my criticism; our leaders tend to be people that respond to the in-box and very seldom had a vision that they could lay out and pursue. Actually, Jim Gritman was one of the few people, as Regional Director who had a new idea; which was working on private lands. He up and did it. There weren't very many people like that. It's hard for me. The early ones like Jansen, Ding Darling, J. Clark Salyer; they were the ones who set it up and got things going. In later years, I think there were just bureaucrats, running with the status quo.

MS. NORTON: What was the high point of your career?

MR. CROZIER: I had lots of them! During the Bicentennial Land Heritage Program I was the Coordinator of that program. I hired a bunch of landscape architects. I think they were the first ones to be hired into the FWS. We master planned all of the refuges in the region in ten months. This was an accomplishment. I was involved in the use of the first computer in master planning refuges. I was involved in the establishment of the first "Friends" group. I think working with the local people in the establishment of the Minnesota Valley NWR and working both sides of the fence, so to speak, was the most significant.

MS. NORTON: Did you have a low point in your career?

MR. CROZIER: No, I never did. I was never depressed, or upset, or ever not like my job. I liked every job I had. I would have been happy at just about every one of them just to keep doing it. Something always came along and turned out to be better.

MS. NORTON: What was your most dangerous or frightening experience?



MR. CROZIER: That was probably doing law enforcement on the Upper Mississippi when I was working by myself. I was just a young squirt. In the old days they used to call the guys down there “river rangers”. The local people, behind my back, called me the “lone ranger” because I was always working alone on the river. It was kind of neat in a way. I’d be chasing these guys in the morning, and I knew who they were. They knew who we were. At lunch, I’d go to the tavern and have a beer with them. It was a neat relationship. We were on both sides of the fence, but it wasn’t necessarily antagonistic. There were some bad guys down there too. One time we had to arrest a guy and take him to town because he was so untrustworthy. That was probably the most dangerous time.

MS. NORTON: What was your most humorous experience?

MR. CROZIER: That’s hard to do. I can remember lots of fun times. Some of the meetings I went to were fun. There was one when we went to Aransas. They had a lot of wild boar, or pigs on the refuge. A bunch of us went out at night and shot wild pigs. That got pretty wild. I’m not sure it was appropriate, but it was fun doing it. Down there also we bought shrimp one time and ate so much shrimp that they were sliding back out the other way. We had some great times!

MS. NORTON: What would you like to others about your career, and about the FWS?

MR. CROZIER: It was wonderful. I had a great career. It was a good agency to work for, particularly as a Refuge Manager. We had so much independence. It was just an amazing amount of freedom to do your job. While you may not have had a lot of money to do it, there was ways to figure out how to get it done. Usually there wasn’t too many curbs. I did get some reprimands and warnings along the way, but I never took them very seriously.

MS. NORTON: What were some of the changes that you observed in the FWS, like in the personnel and in the environment?

MR. CROZIER: People became better trained and more capable. They came to us that way. I looked around at the end of my career at the people we were hiring, and the younger people who were on board; I thought I would not have been able to compete if I were their age now. I think the people we hired were probably better trained, more capable and had broader perspectives. The public became a lot more conscious of the environment during my career. During the time I was at my first refuges there was hardly anybody in the citizenry who would necessarily come forward to volunteer. Now there are all kinds of refuge volunteers. There is just more involvement and more support by the public.

MS. NORTON: What are your thoughts on the future? Where do you see the FWS heading in the next decade?

MR. CROZIER: As you know, or maybe you don't know; there is a bunch of us who have created the Blue Goose Alliance. It's a nationwide non-profit. We are scattered all over the nation but we kind of run it by email communications. We are trying to separate refuges from the rest of the FWS so that it has the same standing as the National Park Service and the Forest Service. We want to make it a separate agency. That's going to be a long shot, but we are trying to do it. We've got a working group of about forty people. It's amazing to think that over half of them have Meritorious Service Awards. Half a dozen or so of the people have Distinguished Service Awards. It's not just crackpots, or people who are bitter with the FWS. We are still working in our old age, to improve things for wildlife refuges. I am a longtime member of the National Wildlife Refuge Association. I was a regional representative for it after I retired. Then I became a Vice-Chairman of that organization. Another thing I'd like to mention about all of these 'friends' groups that started; the first one was here. It probably started in the 1970s. For a long time there were just a few. Now there are over 200 of them I think. That's been a major change; for refuges to have these citizens groups supporting them and working on the refuge on projects and also lobbying for money. They do whatever is necessary that the Refuge Manager can't do. That's been real satisfying to me; to see these things get up and running and organized. The FWS finally picked up on it and created this core of mentors who are both refuge managers and people with friends' experience. Since I was a manager who had worked with friends' groups, and was President of a friends group, I was in a position to do some mentoring for them. I've been the past president and am one of the founders of the group here. Now I am President of the Minnesota Valley Trust, which got 26 million dollars of mitigation money from the Metropolitan Airport Commission. We've invested that money. Unfortunately, the market hasn't done very well. But we've done better than most people with the investments. This is another non-profit group. We have a five member Board of Directors. We're going to be spending that money on mitigation projects to compensate for damage to the Minnesota Valley NWR created by the new airport runway. That's pretty exciting because I don't know of another one of those in the nation. The FWS could have taken the money and it would have disappeared into the treasury. The Refuge Manager here was smart enough to see that this didn't happen. We worked with him in setting up this non-profit. Then the MAC gave the money to the non-profit. We are now in control of it and working with the refuge to see that it's spent in the proper way. That's pretty exciting.

MS. NORTON: You bet! Do you have any photographs or documents that you'd care to donate or share with the archives?

MR. CROZIER: Yeah, I've got some documents. I've got a speech that I gave on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the creation of the refuge here. It was kind of unique because and neighbor and I came up with the proposal. We were on the Burnsville Environment Council together. He sent it in to Congress. A Congressman asked the FWS to check out the feasibility. By chance, I got to do the feasibility report on the project that I had

dreamed up. Naturally, it was feasible! Then we got a lot of money to do the planning and we working a lot with local people and Congress to get it enacted. I have an extra copy of the speech that I will give you. I also have some of the memoirs that we've worked up for our family history book. I've got the portion that pertains to the FWS written up. I can give you that.

MS. NORTON: Whom else do you think we should interview?

MR. CROZIER: All of the people that I know of! I could give you a list of people who are members of the Blue Goose Alliance that I communicate with most frequently.

MS. NORTON: Are they all former FWS employees?

MR. CROZIER: Oh yeah! Well, nearly ninety percent of them are. There is also Juanita Carpenter, Forest's wife. She knows everything and she's pretty sharp yet. She just moved to Rochester. She's pretty knowledgeable. You're not interviewing everybody are you?

MS. NORTON: Oh yes, as many as possible. You are my thirty-third! I'm trying to get to fifty by the first of the year! I'll ask Mark Madison if we are planning to interview Mrs. Carpenter.

MR. CROZIER: Forest was so instrumental in so many people's lives. He started the National Wildlife Refuge Association. Juanita wrote the by-laws for it. He was a major influence in the refuge system. Now that you mention it, when you ask who influenced the FWS the most, I say Forest Carpenter. He influenced it as much as anybody in a very quiet, subtle way.

MS. NORTON: Yes, he was always very nice. I always thought it would be interesting to work for him too. Of course, I just stayed in law enforcement my entire career. Ed, thank you so much for your time to do this. It was great! I am sure that you'll be asked for at the archives. People who come there to visit will be able to ask if they have information on particular people. Then they can read about you! We'll send you a copy of the typed transcription.

MR. CROZIER: I am interested in that because we do all of this family history. We've done these seven family history books. Our family has been involved in conservation for 200 and some years. We have a special interest in it and we've written up a lot of those experiences already. It's a good project.

MS. NORTON: Thank you very much!

